BioSci Peer Mentor Program

Description

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“When I first came to UCSD the first thing I did was create a 4 year plan for myself with the help of my academic counselors and now as a mentor in the BioSci Mentor Program I have the privilege of telling my mentees that creating a 4 year plan for themselves will be very helpful throughout their years here at UCSD.”- 
“Hi! My name is Nathan Onpaeng, a third-year Bio/Bioinformatics major at Sixth College. As someone who has dealt with imposter syndrome throughout the first two years of college, I had always longed for a peer that had experiences with the same struggles to help guide me through that. “However, now that I have found some success at UCSD, I hope to give my mentees someone to rely on and have them realize that everyone goes through the same struggles as them, and that these struggles are what leads them towards their own version of success.”
“I believe so much in mentoring because every successful individual at a point in their lives look up to those with experience to navigate every path and challenges they encounter. No man is an island not even when it comes to science. We live in a collaborative world where every ideas count. Mentoring therefore provides a platform for many to learn, adapt to big transitions and reach out when the journey gets tougher. ”

Onyeka Chukwudozie
Division of Biological Sciences, Doctoral Student, and assistant to BioSci Peer
“Being a Bio-Sci Peer mentor has allowed me to offer the support, guidance, and resources I wish I had as a first generation freshman. I hope that the workshops, one on one talks, and connections I offer my mentees will help them grow into not only successful students at UCSD, but also successful leaders outside of campus”
Ivan Chavez BioSci Peer Mentor and General Biology Major
"I have been so blessed to have worked with such an amazing team of peer mentors, advisors like Onyeka and Janni, and most especially, my peer mentor group! They have been through so much this year and even though we were all busy with school and exams, we came together and found our time to support one another and enjoy each other’s company. Thank you so much to the BioSci Peer Mentor program, I am fortunate to have this experience before graduating this spring!"
"Being a peer mentor for first years majoring in biological science is one of the most rewarding positions I have held. I am able to not only connect with them over the similar experiences that I have been through and that they are currently going through but also I am able to give them advice that I wish someone told me when I was a first year: That getting into research is tough and it is okay to be faced with countless number of rejections before one acceptance, that the quarter system is extremely fast and difficult, and most importantly that I am enough and that I belong in the biological sciences. Watching my mentees grow each and every quarter (whether that be achieving their targeted GPA or getting a research position) is such a pleasure and privilege."
Hello, I am Maximino Torres, a current 4th year Muir student in the BioSci mentor program acting as a mentor. My current experiences with this program and helping my mentees is that I give them a lot of resources that help them study for classes and support them when school gets overwhelming for them. I shared my experience to my mentees and they took the things I say to heart which led them to asking more questions scheduling classes for new quarters, what classes to take, my own class experiences, and other information regarding jobs and lab positions. The best way I support my mentees is by giving them the resources they need when they talk to me. I also tell them to make time for themselves and use it as a mental break so, my mentees don’t get too overwhelmed by everything and can have fun within their college experiences. So far, I’ve done my best and helped my mentees with different situations such as feeling scared about exams to problems with roommates.
Maximino Torres
BioSci Peer Mentor and Neurobiology major

“Being a peer mentor with the BioSci program has allowed me to guide and support students throughout their journey here at UCSD. I have had the privilege to connect with my mentees and provide them with resources that I was initially unaware of coming into this school. Hearing the same questions I had during my first year and being able to bridge that gap and provide tools for them to succeed has been such an honor. I can’t wait to see how all of our BioSci mentees thrive in the next upcoming years and beyond.”

Alejandra Cueva-Becerra
BioSci Peer Mentor and Human Biology Major
Gaining acceptance into a STEM program at a major research university can come with challenges. Such challenges may include becoming part of a community, locating support and resources when needed, understanding the culture, navigating institutional processes, and specifically, developing an identity as a scientist in the discipline. Successfully navigating this can translate into academic success and persistence in a STEM career. The BioSci Peer Mentor program seeks to develop new student’s sense of belonging, grow their self-confidence, and provide a space to learn to navigate the University and the academic world.

The BioSci Peer Mentor program was initiated in 2021. It pairs first-year BioSci majors with mentors of Senior or Junior standing. The focus is primarily on first-generation academic and students from groups who are underrepresented in STEM.

The program is offered in collaboration with the Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion, in particular the Center for Empathy and Social Justice in Human Health.